

The Ohio State University Commencement

Remarks By

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Thank you, Dr. Holbrook, for that kind introduction. I am truly honored to be part of this important event with our nearest neighbors to the north, The Ohio State University.

I'm sure you've wondered what's on the other side of King Avenue. Battelle is a global research and development organization headquartered here in Columbus that oversees about 16,000 staff and has 100 locations around the world. Officially, our mission is to translate discovery into innovative applications that advance society and improve our quality of life. Put more simply, we believe that we "open doors to the future."

Battelle and OSU are linked by more than geography. For example, almost 600 Battelle staff members in Central Ohio graduated from OSU, and of those, about 150 hold more than one OSU degree. That means nearly a quarter of Battelle employees in Central Ohio are Ohio State University graduates – so when the boss sees red, or at least scarlet, on Friday, it's generally for a good reason!

I'm also pleased that Dr. Holbrook and I are working together to accelerate the ways Battelle and OSU collaborate and look at common areas where both of our institutions can achieve world-class results. For example, we've set in motion some exciting efforts in medical and life sciences as well as in homeland security.

At Battelle, we've also done our share of sports technology research and we'd love to join forces with OSU some day. Right now the Buckeyes are doing just fine the old-fashioned way – with talent, teamwork, and Coach Tressell.

As "newly-minted" graduates of The Ohio State University, chances are you've just completed about a fifth of your life as well as the work for your degree. This morning, I'd like to look with you for a moment past the celebrations, and even the uncertainties, and consider some of the ways the remaining four-fifths of your lives will change.

And change they will, most likely in ways that you cannot now anticipate. Sometimes, you will find it necessary to set aside – even transcend – what you've learned in the last few years. But for now, I'd like to focus on just two phrases. First – *In life, be a storyteller*. And second – *At work, deliver value*. They're not the standard bromides for happiness and success you might expect in a commencement address, but I've found them to be extremely useful in my own career.

"In life, be a storyteller." I'm talking about storytelling with roots in the oral traditions of our ancestors, long before the advent of the written word – or internet chatrooms! Storytelling was – and still is – a means to transmit knowledge, impart wisdom, and

instruct upcoming generations. And, at it's best, storytelling provides a sense of continuity between past, present, and future.

My mother was a storyteller. I remember her telling us how early in her life, she saw Haley's Comet, and how the horizons of her world were widened with the arrival of radio and the passenger airplane. Later in her life, as a nurse, she observed the impact of sulfa, then penicillin, and in fact was cured of TB as one of the first recipients of tetracycline. She also watched on television as Neil Armstrong took a "...giant leap for mankind," and marveled at how the personal computer became just one more household appliance.

What stories will you tell your children and grandchildren? How will your lives change? And how will tomorrow be unimaginably different than today? This is a conversation my wife, Lynne, and I have with our children and grandchildren regularly – children and grandchildren, I might add, who:

Have no concept of a television with only 13 channels and no remote control;

Don't remember Atari, Pac Man, or 8-track tapes;

Think Alabama, America, Boston, Chicago, and Kansas are places, not popular bands, and

Believe Jay Leno has always hosted the Tonight Show!

During the first fifth of your lives, you've seen significant changes in health care, homeland and personal security, energy usage, environmental and climate concerns, and the apparent necessity of cell phones. You've also seen shifts in how some more abstract words like "culture" and "freedom" are defined.

What stories will you tell your children and grandchildren? How will the remaining four-fifths of your lives change? And how will tomorrow be unimaginably different than today?

Throughout history the most significant changes in science, art, and national aspirations take place when previously isolated disciplines or organizations intersect. Furthermore, these "intersections" are almost always unexpected. The photocopier, or "Xerox" machine, is one example in Battelle's history of how the pursuit of one challenge gave rise to an entirely different and unrelated "solution."

At Battelle, we occasionally gather together some experts, analyze some trends, anticipate some new "intersections", peer into the corporate crystal ball, and make some predictions about how specific areas of our lives are likely to change. Three important ones to think about this morning are health care, personalized energy, and what I'll refer to as "personal privacy".

In **Health Care**, you'll witness how the confluence of nano materials, cellular engineering, and organic memory chips produces miracles like:

The “Digital Eye” – an implantable, electronic retina that will restore sight on a limited basis. Or,

Brainwave Taps that allow the brain’s signals to bypass damaged spinal nerves and control prophalactic arms, hands, and feet directly. Or,

Nanotechnology Monitors which are surgical implants that will be able to continually monitor body chemistry and bloodstream activity for “orphan” cancer cells or other developments requiring attention, much like a “service” warning light on an automotive instrument panel.

Future sources of **Personalized Energy** will feature enhanced mobility and renewability. As light, heating and cooling, computers, consumer electronics, and medical technology become more tailored to individual needs, their energy sources will become more portable and self-sustaining. Fuel cells of various types will be ubiquitous, but will still be just a part of the story.

We foresee a gradual shift in the coming years away from large power plants to smaller, local plants and even to individual home generation systems, or what’s called “distributed generation”.

However, we know that virtually all energy usage has consequences and, recently, we’ve come to better understand the challenges of global climate change, control or disposal of carbon dioxide, and the need for potable water in other parts of the planet. We’ve framed the questions; it’s up to the next generation to develop the solutions. What will they be? In the next 40 to 50 years, what will you consider to be “renewable” energy? It may be radically different than how we think of it today. And what “intersections” of new knowledge will provide the answers?

What I have called “**Personal Privacy**” touches on the ethical dimension of technology, and here I have fewer predictions than I have questions and precautions. For example, when tiny machines can access brain waves and monitor bloodstreams, how do we protect the sanctity of that information? And when everything from our health history to our most recent grocery purchase is profiled in some distant data base, how do we prevent every detail of our lives from being publicly broadcast?

Decisions about these and similar “security” issues will arise from the intersection of our moral, ethical, and cultural expectations. As accountants, educators, engineers, health care specialists, and social scientists, how will you approach this intersection? Just as important, how will you use your collective skills to resolve the dilemmas?

That brings us to the second of our two phrases, “*At work, deliver value.*” Today, the word “value” has a broader meaning than just the ratio of cost to quality. Adding “value” to a product or service means delivering on expanded expectations. And in a competitive global marketplace, the products and services – even the individuals – that deliver the best “value” are the ones that will succeed.

It’s fair to say you have already increased your “value” to a future employer by earning a college degree from The Ohio State University. If your Ohio State education expanded

your capacity to learn, enabled you to sort through and analyze information, encouraged you to cooperate with others whose expertise is very different from your own, and made you willing to be perpetually inquisitive, you will be able to “deliver value”.

“In life, be a storyteller. At work, deliver value.” In closing, I would add, *“Do all things with integrity, concern, and commitment.”* Be true to yourself and honest with others – that’s integrity. Be aware of how what you do affects others – that’s concern. And believe in the worth of what you do – that’s commitment.

What stories will you tell your children and grandchildren? By all means tell them about the changes you’ve witnessed in your world, and point out some of what may change in their lifetimes. But don’t forget to tell them how you helped bring about positive change through your family, your career, and your community. That is your challenge; that will be your legacy. And let it be a story future generations are eager to share. It starts here.

Thank you, and congratulations!